

A Serving of Hope

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Oregon Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous

June 2015

FAITH & SANITY

“Clearly a power greater than ourselves had to be found if we were to be restored to sanity.”

~The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, p. 12.

For someone as impulsive and driven to find relief as I was, sanity took many forms: waiting instead of acting, looking for the positive in a situation, feelings of satisfaction when the action fell short of the intention, and learning to be aware of my compulsion and think it through.

When I relied on my wits alone, I used all my energy to make things happen. Too often I met with frustration, disappointment, and feelings of failure or self-pity, which led me back to the food.

The Higher Power I found in Overeaters Anonymous revealed a more peaceful approach to living. He enabled me to begin asking for help, contemplate my options, and anticipate the effect of my actions on others.

I began to trust in this Higher Power, trust my instincts, and, ultimately, trust other people. Now my faith in that power reveals itself in the smallest decisions during my day.

I feel a calmness and a confidence that produce realistic expectations under adversity. Now that's sanity.

~Voices of Recovery, page 36.

Life is not about waiting for the storm to pass.

It's about learning to dance in the rain.

~Unknown.

How has OA saved your life? Share your story of recovery. Email your submission to newsletter@oregon-oa.com.

Each One Bring One Or I Put My Hand in Yours

Although I came to OA over three years ago, it took me nearly 18 months to get around to finding a good sponsor and begin working the program in earnest, becoming abstinent, making a food plan, action plan, and working the steps. Since that time in July of 2013, I have released about 55 pounds, and have begun to sponsor others.

It was with great trepidation I began sponsoring since I didn't feel qualified. My sponsor told me that I had more to share than I realized, as I still could remember what it was like to be a newcomer and newly abstinent. I attended an all-day sponsorship workshop in early 2014 where I stood up during introductions to be recognized as an available sponsor. During the "meet and greet" time with potential sponsees, I met some incredible people and my fears subsided a bit. Then I had my own sponsee.

I learned so much as she began her journey of self discovery, while we walked together through the first three steps. Since then I have taken on several others to sponsor. From each, I learned as they plumbed the depths of themselves, I had to plumb the depths of myself to meet the challenge. I also had to be humble enough to say, "I don't know, but I'll find out and get back to you." Then I'd call my sponsor for guidance.

As those I sponsored also qualified to sponsor, I found in them the same resistance and fears I'd seen in myself.

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Upcoming Events

June 6, Monthly speakers meeting, 7:00PM-8:30PM, at Girl Scouts, 9620 SW Barbur Blvd., Portland; contact Ilene 503 268-3064.

June 20, Sponsorship workshop, 11:30am, Paulist Center at St. Philip Neri. Contact Shelby (503) 388-8638

July 31-August 2. Serenity Retreat. Alton L. Collins Retreat Center, 32867 SE Hwy 211, Eagle Creek, OR. Scholarships available. Email serenityretreat@oregon-oa.org, or call Vee at 449-6005.

September 18-20, Region 1 Convention: The Journey is the Destination, Riverhouse Hotel & Convention Center, Bend, OR. <https://sites.google.com/site/region12015convention/home>

Sharing

Why is sharing so hard for me? I know from textbooks that those on the extroverted end of the scale process while talking. It's amazing watching them arrive at their answer or thought. But for me, and I'm assuming those like me who sit towards the introverted end of the scale, sharing is a major task. How does one listen to their fellows while focusing on the processing inside of their own mind? For me it means coming prepared with what and how I want to share. Sometimes it feels like a major production....word it correctly, emphasize your point, add feelings and make sure it fits into the 3 minute limit. Whew. It all feels like a failure if the topic turns out to be one that my share doesn't fit in.

How do I prepare for a topic I hadn't thought about before? Sometimes I'm blessed with moments of silence. To extroverts, those seemingly long periods of silence are calling to be rescued. To the introverts in the room, this is our chance to process what we heard, come up with our thoughts and quickly put together a complete sentence.

The ironic part of all this is that I usually get more grateful thanks from those quickly put together thoughts; those thoughts that seem to come from the heart and not the mind. To my ears I hear confusion, repeated circles of word particles, but to the suffering ear, those words make sense and a soul is touched. Maybe it's the emotions of fear, tenderness or genuineness that

pierces a kindred soul and someone's day is changed.

One of my sharing mistakes is waiting for something big to share. I want the big aha moment to hit me first. I think most things I have to say aren't big enough to take 3 precious minutes away from the meeting. I forget that little things added to someone else's little things makes for big things. I also forget that what seems small to me may be some else's gem and my words may be just what they needed to hear. I am often touched not by the main point someone is sharing, but rather something else they've added before or after it.

Sharing, prepared or not, is a form of service to me. Sitting in a meeting full of more newcomers than experienced OA's, I put my service hat on to break the awkwardness and share some words. A quick prayer to my HP as what would be appropriate...maybe a past experience they can relate to, or maybe something I'm currently working on even if I haven't found a conclusion. I have to believe that for most of us, sharing is moving experience — exposing a part of our soul; a part of our being. It's through sharing that we become stronger in recovery.

With good intent, honesty with my words, an open heart and a prayer on my tongue, I have to believe that what I share is what was meant to be...poetically said, or raw and awkward.

~Kym

Young People's Phone List

Oregon Intergroup is assembling a contact list for young people in OA. If you came into program at age 30 or younger and would like to offer your experience, strength and hope to a young person in our program, please send your contact information to youngpeople@oregon-aa.org. Include your name, phone number, email address and the age you were when you came into OA. WSO defines a young person as someone who is 30 years or younger. If you came into program when you were older than 30 years old and would also like to be a resource to the younger members of our fellowship, you are also welcome to add your name to the young people's phone list.

Got CDs?

Our Intergroup CD library needs your help! A lot of our CDs have been checked out for a long time. We all need a chance to hear the experience, strength and hope found in our CD library.

If you have a CD from our library, please return it so others can strengthen their recovery. You can return a CD by either giving it to your IG Rep or mailing it to the PO Box on the front of the CD package.

Thanks so much for your help. For questions, contact Marie at 503-351-0917.

Calling All Meetings: Is Your Voice Being Heard?

Do you want to strengthen OA in your area and throughout Oregon? Make sure your voice is heard in full force by sending an Intergroup Rep to your monthly Oregon Intergroup meeting. Give your members an opportunity to serve and help all of us benefit from a strong and diverse OA organization. Oregon Intergroup meets the second Wednesday of every month at the Girls Scouts building, 9620 SW Barbur Blvd, Portland, OR 97219.

Guideposts to God's Will

Often, it's difficult for me to know whether I'm in self-will when I make a decision or whether I'm following God's will. How am I learning to tell the difference? I know that it's more likely God's will if:

- I have participated with others and not isolated in making the decision.
- I have sought clarity from people whose programs I respect, such as my sponsor and long-term sponsors.
- I have prayed about it.
- I have written in my journal.
- I have reached a decision and then "sat with it" for a bit instead of acting impulsively.
- I have a deep knowing in my heart and my gut, as well as having the knowledge in my brain.
- I view my decision as footwork, realizing that God may change the plan and that I must be flexible so I don't get tunnel vision.
- The decision enhances my life instead of being either detrimental or neutral. I can waste much of my life on neutral time fillers, such as reading or watching TV.
- I can accept others' suggestions and opinions about my decision, understanding the loving spirit in which they give their views, even if those views don't agree with mine. If I can accept their opinions without defensiveness, reflect on them, see what fits for me and what does not, and then make my decision, I'm more likely to have God's clarity.

These guideposts work for me in small decisions, such as whether to buy food on the way home from work (which generally is unsafe for me) or to go home and cook something. They also work for me in big decisions. Shall I change to part-time work or stay with full-time work? How can I best help a family member who is hurting without becoming a rescuer? I find that these specific guideposts help me. I hope they help you.

~Pennsylvania, *Seeking the Spiritual Path*, page 50.

CONVENTION SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE!

Oregon Intergroup has 3 scholarships available, \$60 each, for the convention in Bend, September 18th - 20th 2015. Anyone who belongs to a group listed on our meeting directory is eligible to apply. A drawing will be held August 1st to pick the 3 winners.

To request a scholarship, send your full name and an email or phone number to OIG-Scholarship, PO Box 2429, Portland, OR 97208; or send an email to treas@oregon-oa.org with a subject line of "Scholarship request". Requests must be received by August 1st in order to be in the drawing. Everyone who applies will be contacted as quickly as possible after the drawing. Individual groups are encouraged to consider giving scholarships also.

REGION ONE CONVENTION PACKAGE RAFFLE

For \$5.00 per entry, you may win: Full Convention registration, including the Saturday Night Banquet, and two nights lodging at the Riverhouse Hotel in Bend. Raffle ticket entries must be received by July 15 for this drawing.

Details are available on the Region 1 website at <http://www.oaregion1.org/2015-convention-package-raffle.html>

Each One Bring One

(Continued from front page)

When the monthly sponsorship workshops were announced, I responded eagerly; I knew I needed help. I took with me one of my sponsees who had just qualified to sponsor, but was reluctant to do so. I knew she wouldn't attend the workshop on her own.

At the workshop, I received materials developed by other groups that listed some techniques that had helped them. I also heard suggestions other experienced sponsors who had tried different styles of mentoring that I hadn't considered. Other participants shared responses they used in different sponsoring situations, which helped get the sponsee back on track.

The sponsee who attended with me received assurance that others found more joy in sponsoring than drawbacks. She gained more confidence. Since then I have gone to the sponsorship workshop with another sponsee. She came away with such a vision, she returned the next month to get more of her questions answered.

These experiences showed me that if I want a sponsee to attend the workshop, it works better if I go too. The new or potential sponsor may be too shy or timid to go to a meeting in a strange place, but may be OK with going with someone. All I know is that it works for me and my sponsees and it may be something other sponsors may want to consider. We all know there are a lot of OA members in recovery that would make great sponsors, if they overcome their fears of the unknown. Attending a Saturday Sponsorship Workshop may be a key.

~Rosanne K, Beaverton

The views expressed in this newsletter are of the person who wrote them and do not represent OA as a whole. Take what you like and leave the rest. Oregon Intergroup serves meetings from Longview to Tillamook, Salem to Portland, Silverton to Hood River, and includes Vancouver and the surrounding area. Find us online at oregon-oa.org or call (971) 317-6343.

Opening to Change

I'm currently looking for a new job and working the steps around my career. I'm on step six, which asks me to be entirely ready to have God remove all my defects of character. I'm seeing where it's been much easier to believe I'm a victim of bad luck, or the economy, or a lack successful parental influences than to look at how I'm holding myself back in my work life.

In sharing my fifth step with my sponsor, I saw a lot of areas where I stand in the way of what I say I want. So my job now is to become entirely ready to work with a Power greater than myself to remove my ineffective behaviors. And where I'm not entirely ready, to look at why that might be.

Step six brings up the possibility of change and of becoming a more functional person. It doesn't mean I become a better person fundamentally, or that I'm a bad person who needs to become good. I think of it like a computer that isn't running as well as it could, but if you close some old programs that aren't in use, it functions better and frees up more space to use new programs.

Part of my recovery is to see the areas where I've closed my mind and heart to change. For me, this includes letting go of the closed-mindedness that tells me nothing will ever change, and the part that refuses to risk wanting what my heart desires. The *For Today* reading for May 27th stood out at me. It was about the person who never changes his or her opinion and therefore becomes closed minded. It reads, "Some days I feel stuck, unable to let go. Let me look at my opinion. Where did I get it? Is it something I still believe? Is it something I believed as a child? Is it still valid? Why do I keep it? There is profit in questions."

I made a long list of character defects that are at play in my work life, and my sponsor had me pick three. She asked me to look at how each defect served me in the past, how it is hurting me today, and what my life will be like without the defect. She said it's essential that I

find the exact nature of the shortcoming. To me, that means to find the 'profit in the questions.' That I evaluate the old beliefs and look at what my life will be like without them. I look at how I came to believe these limitations, and see how at one time they may have been useful to me, but now only hurt me.

Sometimes the idea of what my life will be like without a particular old pattern or habit is so hard to imagine that all I can think of is the way it is currently. But I have found that in order to change something, I have to take my focus off how things are and put my focus on how I want them to be. I love the quote by Buckminster Fuller that says, "You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete."

I also remind myself that asking these questions doesn't have to mean paralysis by analysis. I'm not God. I don't have to make it all happen and I don't have to figure it all out on my own. I only have to be more and more willing to look at myself and my motives and behaviors. I must remind myself that I don't have to change myself alone, just like I don't have to (and can't) release myself from compulsive overeating on my own.

Steps two and three help me remember that a Power greater than myself can restore me to sanity and that there's usefulness in trusting this power. This power can help me see the possibility of change and of what programs aren't serving me any longer.

As for the outcome of this career-centered step work, it's too soon to say, but I do have a couple of interviews. I also have more hope and increased faith that Higher Power is with me as I seek to be more authentic and of service in my work life. I see that when I feel like a victim, it takes my power away. When I instead look at my part in how my life is playing out, it can be very painful, but also shows me that the power to change is within me, with the help of my program and HP!

~Katie S.

A Vision for You...

Our book is meant to be suggestive only. We realize we know only a little. God will constantly disclose more to you and to us. Ask Him in your morning meditation what you can do each day for the man who is still sick. The answers will come, if your own house is in order. But obviously you cannot transmit something you haven't got. See to it that your relationship with Him is right, and great events will come to pass for you and countless others. This is the Great Fact for us.

Abandon yourself to God as you understand God. Admit your faults to Him and to your fellows. Learn away the wreckage of your past. Give freely of what you find and join us. We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny.

May God bless you and keep you—until then.

~ Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th edition, pg. 164.